

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
Natural Resource Commission**

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**ITEM**

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**INFORMATION**

**TOPIC**

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation – An Iowa DNR Partner

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The Department would like to acknowledge the important partnership between the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) and the Department of Natural Resources, as well as the contributions INHF provides for Iowa's natural resources. Mark Ackelson, President of the INHF, has information to present to the Commission regarding the Foundation's mission, with specific emphasis on ways it has partnered with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation was founded in 1979 by three people who recognized that Iowa could not protect its natural resources through government alone: then-Governor Robert D. Ray; Gerry Schnepf of the Iowa Conservation Commission (now the Iowa DNR); and Robert Buckmaster, an avid outdoorsman from Waterloo. Frustrated by lost conservation opportunities, they created a private, nonprofit organization that could act quickly to purchase and protect important natural lands "for those who follow."

Twenty-eight years later, the first generation of "those who follow" is now here — and INHF has protected nearly 100,000 acres of Iowa's prairies, wetlands woodlands, greenways, trails, and river corridors. Nearly 1/3 of this land is now part of the DNR's system.

INHF reports that, together, INHF and the DNR have partnered on 164 land protection projects, adding 29,282 acres to the lands that are under DNR ownership and management. Some of INHF largest projects have become treasured DNR sites—including the 1,260-acre Mines of Spain area in Dubuque (INHF's first big project) and Anglers Bay with 2/3 mile of natural shore line on Big Spirit Lake (a current project, and INHF's most expensive to date). Numerous wetland complexes within the Prairie Pothole Region of north central Iowa have been protected through INHF.

INHF has also partnered with DNR on securing conservation easements, including those at River Bend on the Upper Iowa River and Forest Legacy easements. This partnership also extends to planning efforts, including the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan. INHF has also helped establish the REAP program, and is active in current efforts to provide more, sustainable state funding for natural resources.

INHF works with a wide array of partners ranging from private landowners, businesses and other nonprofits, to all levels of government. Partners are most likely to request INHF assistance when they need either immediate action or help with complex, long-term projects.

Ken Herring, Administrator  
Conservation and Recreation Division  
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